

Message Text

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R 190015Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2169

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SN, CH

SUBJ: FOREIGN MINISTER RAJARATNAM MEETS CHOU EN LAI

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. STRAITS TIMES MARCH 18 CARRIED SPECIAL REPORT FROM PEKING BY STRAITS TIMES REPORTER PETER LIM ON CHOU EN LAI/RAJARATNAM CONVERSATION IN PEKING CLINIC EVENING MARCH 16. LIM IS SENIOR STRAITS TIMES REPORTER AND ONE OF FIVE SINGAPORE JOURNALISTS ACCOMPANYING RAJA. STORY ACCOMPANIED BY TWO LARGE PHOTOGRAPHS. ONE, ON FRONT PAGE, CARRIES TITLE "CHOU'S HAND OF FRIENDSHIP" SHOWING CHOU AND RAJA WARMLY SHAKING HANDS WHILE K.C. LEE, SENIOR GOS MINISTER OF STATE, LOOKS ON. OTHER PHOTO SHOWS CHOU, RAJA AND LEE COMFORTABLY SEATED AND CHATTING AMIABLY IN LOUNGE OF CLINIC.

2. LIM'S REPORT STATES THAT CONVERSATION LASTED 45 MINUTES AND COVERED A RANGE OF INTERNATIONAL, REGIONAL AND BILATERAL ISSUES, INCLUDING SUBJECTS ALREADY DISCUSSED AT OFFICIAL-LEVEL TALKS. REPORT ALSO NOTES THAT EARLIER SAME DAY HOWE YONG CHONG
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(DIRECTOR, PORT AUTHORITY) AND I.F. TANG (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD) HELD DISCUSSIONS WITH OFFICIALS OF MINISTRY OF FOREIGN

TRADE ON A PROPOSED EXCHANGE OF INDUSTRIAL MISSIONS.

3. HIGHLIGHTS OF LIM'S REPORT ON CHOU-RAJA CONVERSATION AS FOLLOWS:

A. CHOU STRESSED THAT CHINA RESPECTED THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE'S INDEPENDENCE AND UNDERSTOOD SINGAPORE'S FOREIGN POLICY AFTER RECEIVING A FULL BRIEFING ON EARLIER EXCHANGE OF VIEWS.

B. CHOU REPORTEDLY TOUCHED ON COMMERCIAL RELATIONS, MAKING SPECIAL MENTION OF SHIPPING, AND HOPED SUCH RELATIONS WOULD GROW MORE RAPIDLY. (LIM NOTES PARENTHETICALLY THAT CHINESE SHIPS HAVE BEEN HELPING SINGAPORE EXPORTERS COUNTER FAR EAST FREIGHT CONFERENCE (FEFC) FREIGHT INCREASES SINCE FEBRUARY 1972 AND SHIPS OF SINGAPORE' NATIONAL LINE, NEPTUNE ORIENT LINE (NOL), HAVE BEEN CHARTERED BY THE CHINESE.)

C. CHOU RESTATED CHINA'S POLICY ON CHINESE OVERSEAS, DESCRIBING IT AS STRAIGHTFORWARD: ANY CHINESE WHO OPTED FOR SINGAPORE CITIZENSHIP, FOR EXAMPLE, WOULD NO LONGER BE CHINA'S RESPONSIBILITY; THOSE WHO RETAINED CHINESE CITIZENSHIP WOULD REMAIN CHINA'S RESPONSIBILITY BUT MUST OBEY STRICTLY THE LAWS OF SINGAPORE WHOSE GOVERNMENT, IN TURN, WAS EXPECTED TO RESPECT THEIR LEGITIMATE RIGHTS AND PROTECT THEIR LEGITIMATE INTERESTS.

D. CHOU EXPRESSED HOPE THAT DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WOULD BE ESTABLISHED WITH SINGAPORE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, BUT SAID CHINA WAS WILLING TO WAIT FOR SINGAPORE'S CONVENIENCE.

E. CHOU WISHED ASEAN EVERY SUCCESS AND DESCRIBED ITS CREATION AS A GOOD THING FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA. END UNCLASSIFIED

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4. COMMENT: LIM'S REPORT WAS CAREFULLY WORDED AND HAS AUTHORITY. IN VIEW OF ITS IMPORTANCE EMBASSY IS CERTAIN THAT ITS CONTENT WAS APPROVED IN ADVANCE BY RAJARATNAM PERSONALLY. IT THUS REPRESENTS PRECISELY WHAT THE GOS WANTS THE SINGAPORE PUBLIC TO KNOW ABOUT THIS MEETING. IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT THE RE-
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PORT CONTAINS ABSOLUTELY NOTHING OF SUBSTANCE ON WHAT RAJARATNAM SAID TO CHOU. END LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.
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